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DCI Director of Central Intelligence

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# Update Memorandum: NIE 93-22

*From the Chairman, National Intelligence Council*

# Prospects for Bosnia

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## Key Points

- A Bosnian confederation will not long survive any agreement reached in Geneva. Serbia and Croatia will begin to absorb their client ministates, leaving a Muslim rump either dependent on Western support or—in the unlikely event Bosnian-Croatian talks succeed—associated with Zagreb
- A three-way partition of Bosnia-Herzegovina—which largely reflects Serb and Croat aims—will be easier to implement than creating a multiethnic state as envisioned by the Vance-Owen Plan.
- Even so, international forces will have trouble separating and disarming combatants and protecting civilian populations and will be vulnerable to terrorist acts.
- Europeans will be unable to sustain a large-scale open-ended deployment in Bosnia and will link additional troop contributions to a US ground commitment; they would blame the United States for a Bosnian failure if Washington does not commit troops.
- New hostilities in Croatia could derail implementation of a Bosnian settlement and put Western forces in greater danger.

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# Discussion

In NIE 93-22, *Prospects for Bosnia*, the Intelligence Community concluded that there was little prospect of holding together a multiethnic Bosnia and that the country was headed toward some form of partition. The Estimate said that the warring parties doubted the international community's will to undertake major military operations and to sustain a long-term presence to maintain a multiethnic state.

These judgments remain valid. The agreement negotiated in Geneva leaves unsettled key territorial questions that would have to be negotiated in bilateral working groups. Within two years, Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats probably will secede from the Bosnian union.

It is unlikely that the latest round of secret bilateral talks between Tudjman and Izetbegovic will succeed in associating the Muslim part of Bosnia with Croatia. If those talks fail, only a Muslim rump state will remain and will be heavily dependent for its survival on the international community. Absent economic and military support, this rump Bosnia will be absorbed or split by Croatia or Serbia.

This Memorandum updates the findings of National Intelligence Estimate 93-22, issued May 1993. It was prepared under the auspices of the National Intelligence Officer for Europe and was coordinated with the Deputy Director for Intelligence, Central Intelligence Agency; the Director, Defense Intelligence Agency; the Director, National Security Agency; and the Assistant Secretary for Intelligence and Research, Department of State.

We believe the three sides are likely to finalize an agreement that eventually will reduce the fighting. Although Serbia and Croatia could reject the diplomatic process and divide Bosnia by force, neither Zagreb nor Belgrade wants to risk Western military reactions or economic sanctions. The Bosnian Government will not be able to hold to its conditions once winter sets in, and it is even clearer it has dwindling international support.

If there is no negotiated settlement, localized heavy fighting is likely to continue indefinitely, especially between Muslim and Croat forces in central and southern Bosnia. This would magnify the war's human costs, prevent implacement of an effective international force, and would probably lead to the complete disappearance of a Bosnian state.

**Prospects for Implementing an Agreement**

Prospects for a lasting cease-fire and for enforcing a three-way territorial division are higher than the earlier Vance-Owen Plan:

- The agreement under discussion enables the Serbs and, to a lesser extent, the Croats to achieve their major territorial aims.
- The Muslims are deeply dissatisfied with the emerging postwar map but must have international support for their survival.

- Prospects of a harder winter than last year and more severe fuel, food, and other shortages add incentives for all three war-weary communities to cooperate.

**Bosnia: Muslim Ministate for Muslims**

With a multiethnic state including all of Bosnia no longer possible, President Izetbegovic and his colleagues are intent on maximizing the territorial boundaries of a Muslim entity to improve its dim chances of survival. Izetbegovic is deeply disappointed in the international community's readiness to accept a "Serb victory," and will continue to press for more concessions. Nevertheless, economic privations, the specter of still more human suffering, and the likelihood that the Bosnian military offensive will stall leave him and his colleagues few options other than to sign before the onset of winter.

Even if the Bosnian Government agrees to a deal, Muslim hardliners are likely to continue to fight. Periodic clashes are likely over the dividing line between the Muslim and Croatian ministates and around Brcko, where Serb and Muslim claims overlap. In addition, some Muslim radicals may stage terrorist acts against Muslim moderates, Serbs, and Croats:

- Muslim resistance may pose the greatest risk to Western forces implementing an agreement, although local Serbs and Croats may also resist territorial adjustments.

Continued fighting between Muslims and Croats will be a major impediment to secret Muslim-Croat negotiations to merge their areas into a confederation with Croatia.

***Bosnia: Losing the War Against Winter***

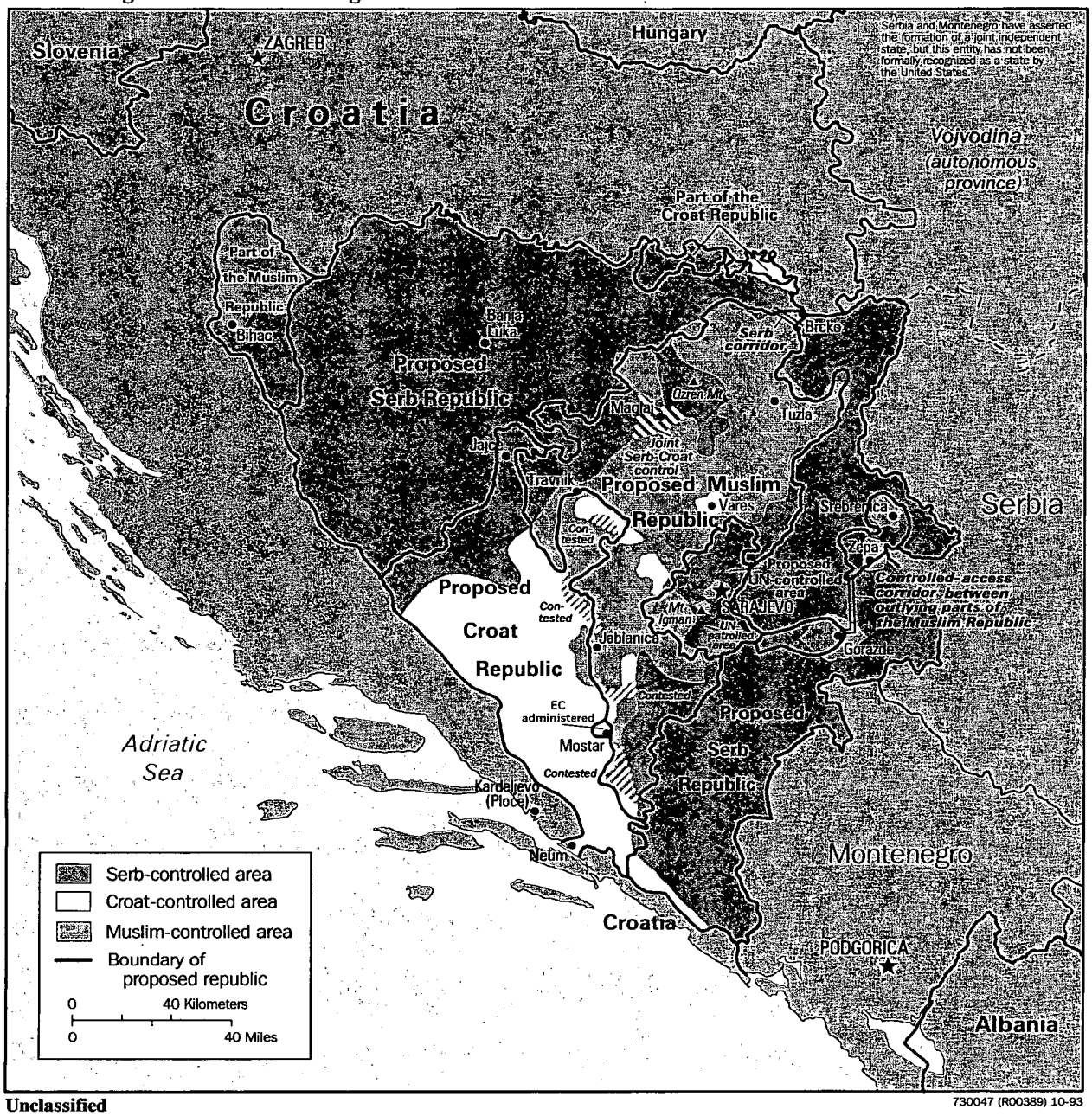
*If fighting continues, about 2.8 million people—about double that of last year—will need assistance. Tens of thousands could perish from disease, hunger, and hardship. Assuming continued combat, total needs during the next six months could easily reach 315,000 metric tons of food and 75,000 metric tons of nonfood items at a cost approaching $300-350 million. Even if the fighting ends, hundreds of thousands of refugees and displaced persons will attempt to relocate, keeping humanitarian needs high through the winter. In that case, the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees planning figures suggest the six-month cost of relief would still be at least $200 million. In any case, relief will be difficult to deliver because of damage to Bosnia's main roads.*

Limited information as to each side's motives suggests the Muslims have engaged in these talks because Izetbegovic despairs of reaching a viable settlement with the Serbs. For his part, Tudjman is trying to expand his influence to as much of Bosnia as possible and may hope an agreement with the Muslims will bolster his sagging international support.

**Serbia and Croatia: Consolidating Control**

Hardliners in Belgrade and Zagreb will want to dispense with the formality of Bosnian union and absorb into Serbia and Croatia

**Areas of Control and Proposed Partitioning in Bosnia and Herzegovina**

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proper the areas under the control of their conationals. However, Presidents Tudjman and Milosevic will try to bring their compatriots to heel and avoid flouting the fiction of a unified Bosnia that the international community supports. Zagreb already exerts strong control over the Bosnian Croat leadership and need not be in a hurry to enforce formal annexation.

Milosevic hopes to stop the fighting, consolidate Serb gains, and get an end to economic sanctions in order to shore up his own position at home. Serbia is now suffering a virtual economic collapse. Milosevic, however, remains in firm control and has embarked on a campaign to weaken Seselj and other ultranationalists who want to expand their power base in Bosnia. He is having more difficulty controlling Bosnian Serb leaders. Bosnian Serb military commander Mladic is a wild card; although generally a Milosevic ally, he will not readily follow orders to give up territory for the sake of an agreement.

**Impact in Other Post-Yugoslav Hotspots**

Although conclusion of a settlement in Bosnia is likely to mitigate Serb-Croat tensions temporarily, neither Belgrade nor Zagreb is ready to make major concessions with regard to their dispute over the Serb-held areas of Croatia. A settlement would enable Tudjman to concentrate on regaining Serb-held territory in Croatia, by negotiation if possible but by force if necessary. Serbs in Croatia will stand their ground, anticipating that a settlement will set a precedent for border changes and will free up their brethren in Bosnia to come to their aid:

- A new war in Croatia would increase the danger for Western forces in Bosnia and would seriously complicate their logistic support.

A Bosnian settlement would have little direct impact in Kosovo or Macedonia, where economic, social, and interethnic problems continue to deepen and could spin out of control.

**No Long-Term European Commitment**

The Intelligence Community thinks that Western Europe alone is unlikely to commit sizable additional forces to a long-term deployment in Bosnia. At best, most Allies will link the size of any additional troop contributions for Bosnia to the commitment of US ground forces.

Europeans probably would interpret a major US deployment as Washington's acceptance of long-term responsibility for the region. The Allies will tie their time commitment to a US exit strategy and will not retain large forces in Bosnia after US forces are withdrawn. With few exceptions, Allies would be reluctant to go beyond traditional UN "peacekeeping" functions and engage in more aggressive "peace enforcement" missions that might be envisioned under a NATO command structure:

- Europeans would blame the United States for the failure of a peace agreement if Washington does not commit ground troops to an implementation force.

The burden on military forces and finances will limit Allied ability to sustain an increased presence if they are asked to send more troops to Bosnia. NATO experts estimate the first year's operating cost at $6 billion. Some contributors will not make new commitments unless there is some guarantee of reimbursement up front. Even France and Britain, the Allies most able to consider providing troops to "peace enforcement" missions, will have difficulty mounting a long-term commitment.

Europeans are concerned that a Muslim ministate will be a bridgehead in Europe for radical Islamic movements, but they prefer this risk to a Serb-Croat partition that would cause more Bosnian Muslims to migrate to Western Europe. European foreign aid funds are stretched thin by competing priorities, but EC members will want to show a good-faith effort toward the survival of the Muslim ministate to counter radical Islamic influence. Whatever they provide, however, will fall short of the billions of dollars needed for Bosnia's enormous reconstruction needs.